

SS3119: PENOLOGY

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Penology

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

3119

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to help students understand the penal system and its operation, with special emphasis on the penal process, penal philosophy, rehabilitative measures and their effectiveness for young offenders.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Explain the aims, justifications and forms of punishment.	30	x	x	
2	Describe the sociological, political and philosophical analyses of punishment and penal practices and attitudes.	20	x	x	
3	Describe the various gatekeepers of and decision-making factors in the penal process.	30	x	x	x
4	Demonstrate the skills to critically evaluate the effectiveness of custodial and community penalties in the rehabilitation of young offenders.	20	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	LTA1: Lectures	Students will engage in lectures about punishment in contemporary societies.	1, 2, 3, 4
2	LTA2: Peer discussion	Students will engage in structured discussions with peers on given topics about penal practices and penal policies.	1, 2, 3, 4
3	LTA3: Visit to a prison or drug rehabilitation centre	A visit to a prison or a drug rehabilitation centre may be organized to enrich students' understanding of penal management and drug rehabilitation.	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	AT1: in-class worksheets	1, 3	20	-	No
2	AT2: Individual paper	2, 3, 4	40	1) Conduct proof editing 2) Generate initial ideas 3) Conduct preliminary analysis	Yes
3	AT3: Quiz	1, 2, 3, 4	40	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. in-class worksheets

Criterion

- 1.1 ability to coordinate with the other group members and share his/her workload and demonstrate good teamwork;
- 1.2 ability to fully understand the recommended readings;
- 1.3 ability to critically analyse the findings as contained in the readings;
- 1.4 ability to link the findings with local/international experiences and practices;
- 1.5 Ability to cite appropriate references/resources, and use a certain referencing style consistently;

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. Individual paper

Criterion

- 2.1 ability to choose a meaningful topic;
- 2.2 ability to search for related references and integrate the findings;
- 2.3 ability to write in reasonably acceptable English;

2.4 Ability to cite appropriate references/resources, and use a certain referencing style consistently;

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. quiz

Criterion

3.1 ability to understand the basic concepts;

3.2 ability to apply the theories/frameworks to critically analyse certain common penal issues/practices;

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Principles and goals of punishment

Decisions in the penal process

Sentencing, discretion and disparity

Sociology of the prison

Privatization of prisons and incarceration of women

Towards justice: restorative justice, retributive justice and welfare model

Community penalties and incapacitation

Nothing works and what works

Recidivism and desistance

Death penalty and abolitionism

UN standards and human rights for prisoners

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Cavadino, M., Dignan, J., Mair, G., and Bennett, J. (2019). <i>The Penal System: An Introduction</i> (6th ed.). London: Sage.
2	Clear, T. R., Reisig, M. D., and Cole, G. F. (2022). <i>American Corrections</i> (13th ed.). Boston: Cengage.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Burke, L. and Gosling, H. 2023. <i>An Introduction to Penology: Punishment, Prisons and Probation</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage..
2	Bersani, B. E. and Doherty, E. E. (2018) Desistance from offending in the twenty-first century. <i>Annual Review of Criminology</i> , 1: 311-34.
3	Bottoms, A., Gelsthorpe, L., & Rex, S. (Eds.). (2002). <i>Community penalties: Change and challenges</i> . Devon: Willan Publishing.
4	Ashworth, A. (1998). <i>The criminal process: An evaluative study</i> (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
5	Ashworth, A. (2010). <i>Sentencing and criminal justice</i> (5th ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6	Brereton, D. (1997). How different are rape trials? A comparison of the cross-examination of complainants in rape and assault trials. <i>British Journal of Criminology</i> , 37(2): 242-261.
7	Daly, K. (1994). Criminal justice ideologies and practices in different voices: Some feminist questions about justice. In N. Lacey (Ed.), <i>Criminal justice</i> (pp. 226-246). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8	Garland, D. (1990). <i>Punishment and modern society: A society in social theory</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.
9	Garland, D. (2001). <i>The culture of control: Crime and social order in contemporary society</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
10	Gelsthorpe, L., & Padfield, N. (Eds.). (2003). <i>Exercising discretion: Decision-making in the criminal justice system and beyond</i> . Devon: Willan Publishing.
11	Goldblatt, P., & Lewis, C. (Eds.). (1998). <i>Reducing offending: An assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour</i> . Home Office Research Study 187. London: Home Office. Retrieved September 22, 2004 at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors187.pdf
12	Hood, R. and Hoyle, C. (2015). <i>The death penalty: a worldwide perspective</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
13	Hudson, B. (1996). <i>Understanding justice: An introduction to ideas, perspectives and controversies in modern penal theory</i> . Buckingham: Open University Press.
14	Hudson, B. (2002). Restorative justice and gendered violence: Diversion or effective justice. <i>British Journal of Criminology</i> , 42(3): 616-634.
15	McMahon, M. (1990). Net-widening: Vagaries in the use of a concept. <i>British Journal of Criminology</i> , 30(2): 121-149.
16	Morris, A. & Maxwell, G. M. (Eds.). (2001). <i>Restorative justice for juveniles: Conferencing, mediation and circles</i> . Oxford: Hart Publishing.
17	Rex, S., & Tonry, M. (Eds.). (2002). <i>Reform and punishment: The future of sentencing</i> . Cullompton: Willan.
18	Robinson, G. (2001). Power, knowledge and “what works” in probation. <i>Howard Journal of Criminal Justice</i> , 40(3): 235-254.
19	von Hirsch, A., Roberts, J., Bottoms, A., Roach, K., & Schiff, M. (Eds.). (2003). <i>Restorative justice & criminal justice: Competing or reconcilable paradigms?</i> Oxford: Hart Publishing.
20	Rodermond, E., Kruttschnitt, C., Slotboom, A.-M., & Bijleveld, C. C. (2016). Female desistance: A review of the literature. <i>European Journal of Criminology</i> , 13(1), 3-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370815597251

21	Sherman, L. W., Farrington, D. P., Welsh, B. C., & MacKenzie, D. L. (2002). Evidence-based crime prevention. London: Routledge. (esp. chapters 2 & 9)
22	Zedner, L. (2002). Dangers of dystopias in penal theory. <i>Oxford Journal of Legal Studies</i> , 22(2): 341-366.
23	Veysey, B.M., Martinez, D.J., Christian, J. (2013). "Getting Out:" A Summary of Qualitative Research on Desistance Across the Life Course. In: Gibson, C., Krohn, M. (eds) <i>Handbook of Life-Course Criminology</i> . Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5113-6_14
24	Readings about the Penal System in Hong Kong:
25	Lo, T. W. (2000). An overview of the criminal justice system in Hong Kong. In O. N. I. Ebbe (Ed.), <i>Comparative and international criminal justice systems: Policing, judiciary, and corrections</i> (2nd ed.) (pp. 113-127). Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.
26	Lo, T. W. (2003). Measures alternative to prosecution of young offenders: Reflections from overseas experiences. In Caritas Social Work Division (Ed.), <i>Solid practice III</i> (pp. 138-149). Hong Kong: Cosmos Books.
27	Lo, T. W., & Harris, R. J. (2004). Community service orders in Hong Kong, England and Wales: Twins or cousins. <i>International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology</i> , 48(3), 373-388.
28	Harris, R. J., and Lo, T. W. (2002). Community service: Its use in criminal justice. <i>International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology</i> , 46(4), 427-444.
29	Lo, T. W., Wong, S. W., & Maxwell, G. (2003). Measures alternative to prosecution for handling unruly children and young persons: Overseas experiences and options for Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Security Bureau, Hong Kong SAR Government.
30	Hong Kong Correctional Service Department: http://www.correctionalservices.gov.hk/
31	National Criminal Justice Reference Service: http://www.ncjrs.gov/